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ABSTRACT

The application and effectiveness of interinstitutional cooperative approaches to academic program development are analyzed, with attention to local, regional, and interstate geographic levels. The rationale for interinstitutional cooperation as well as actions taken by state governing boards to promote the use of this planning strategy within statewide systems of higher education are discussed. In order to operationalize interinstitutional cooperation as a planning strategy to improve academic program development, four planning considerations are needed: basic planning requirements, incentives for planning, planning models, and planning processes. In response to actions taken by state boards, consortia of institutions have acquired the added means to operate more effectively. These consortia have developed and implemented seven interinstitutional cooperative approaches to mutually improve academic program development: articulation agreements, student and staff exchange programs, resource sharing agreements, educational exchange programs, private/public cooperative agreements, and international exchange programs. Recommendations are offered for improving the effectiveness of interinstitutional cooperation through the use of institutional research. (SW)

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INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION: A PLANNING STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION: A PLANNING STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

Interinstitutional cooperation has received increased popularity among state governing boards as a viable planning stragegy to improve academic program development. The raison d'etre and actions taken by such boards to promote the use of this planning strategy within statewide systems of higher education are discussed. In response to the actions taken by such boards, consortiums of insitutions have acquired the added means to operate more effectively. These consortiums have developed and implemented seven interinstitutional cooperative approaches to mutually improve academic program development. These cooperative approaches include articulation agreements, student exchange programs, manpower exchange programs, resource sharing agreements, educational exchange programs, private/public cooperative agreements and international exchange programs. The paper provides a discussion and analysis of the application and effectiveness of these approaches at the local, regional and interstate geographic levels. Recommendations are offered, in the conclusion of the paper, for improving the effectiveness of interinstitutional cooperation through the use of institutional research.

INTRODUCTION

State governing boards of higher education were first established in 1784 with the formation of the New York Board of Regents of the State University of New York [31]. Between the 1950's and the early 1970's, the expansion and development of institutions which comprised statewide systems of higher education attributed to the increased flow of state funding to higher education [4, 18, 29]. Concern over the inability of higher educational institutions to demonstrate and maintain institutional resource efficiency and accountability explains the current reasons why state governments favor the use of such boards in governing statewide systems of higher education [9].

Since the mid-1970's, higher educational institutions have experienced problems of college enrollment decline, demographic changes among college student populations and limited state funding [5, 11, 30]. The inconsistent and ineffective manner by which statewide systems of higher education, as a whole, have addressed these problems are said to explain why state governments have continued to express concern over the lack of and need for institutional resource efficiency and accountability within higher education [9, 30]. Today, state governing boards favor the use of interinstitutional cooperation as a planning strategy for use in statewide coordination directed at improving institutional resource efficiency and accountability for purposes of academic program development.

The purpose of this paper is to describe interinstitutional cooperation as a planning strategy used by state governing boards and consortiums of higher educational institutions for maximizing the use of institutional resources to improve academic program development. Institutions have subscribed to the use of

interinstitutional cooperation prior to and without the encouragement or policy mandates of state governing boards. However, this paper will primarily focus on the raison d'etre and actions taken by such boards to promote the use of interinstitutional cooperation within statewide systems of higher education to achieve academic program development. The design and implementation of academic degree programs and curriculums which are socially relevant, marketable and cost efficient is the operational definition of academic program development as used in this paper.

The paper begins with a brief historical overview of the early use of interinstitutional cooperation in higher education. This is followed by a discussion of the the planning considerations required and used to operationalize interinstitutional cooperation within the institutional planning process of state governing boards and consortiums of institutions. Next, the paper discusses the major interinstitutional cooperative approaches, and the various types of planning objectives for academic program development which they have been used to achieve.

HISTORY OF INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Since the early 1920's [39]and 1960's [41], interinstitutional cooperation has been perceived as a viable planning strategy to maximize the use of limited educational funding resources allocated among higher educational institutions. It received popular appeal in the 1970's among some state governing boards as a means to improve academic program development [9, 10, 24].

During the 1980's, state governing boards sought to maximize the use of interinstitutional cooperation for purposes of academic program development. What external factors, unique to the 1980's, have aided state governing boards

in their efforts to promote the use of interinstitutional cooperation within statewide systems of higher education? The comments below serve as a response to this question.

State governing boards are aided in their efforts by certain external or environmental factors which serve as incentives to encourage institutions to adopt interinstitutional cooperation. These include increased public endorsement of interinstitutional cooperation, institutional struggle for survival, regional dependence, the spread of regionalism in general governmental planning and the reliance of institutions on common funding sources [23].

Perhaps in response to the state governing board's use of funding incentives and governing powers, and the impact of the external factors identified by Kontel and Patterson [23], institutions have begun to accept the idea of interinstitutional cooperation [19]. The Education Commission of the States [12] which serves the research and training needs of state governing boards and higher education administrators has long advocated the need of interinstitutional cooperation. Other such agencies as the National Center of Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) have long recognized the need of interinstitutional cooperation and its emergence as a valuable planning strategy used to avoid the wasteful duplication and misuse of institutional, funding and human resources.

OPERATIONALIZING INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Either implemented by a state governing board or a consortium, four planning considerations are needed to operationalize interinstitutional cooperation as a planning strategy to improve academic program development. These include the basic planning requirements, incentives for planning, planning models, and planning processes. Below, these planning considerations are discussed, followed by several case examples.

Planning Requirments

Relative to the basic planning requirements to achieve interinstitutional cooperation and sharing, Kontel and Patterson [23, pp. 16-20] argue that "there needs to exist leadership commitment; administrative principles; supportive guidelines for statutes, policies, regulations, and directives which guide communication needs assessment, planning, funding, delivery and review." These planning requirements must be considered in the development of a conceptual framework for defining the goals, objectives, operational processes and boundaries of statewide coordination plans which seek to use interinstitutional cooperation for purposes of academic program development [16, 13].

Incentives

State governing boards should provide incentives for encouraging institutions to accept and include interinstitutional cooperation within their institutional plans for academic program development. Three types of incentives have been used by state governing boards. These include efforts to recognize and support the cooperative leadership of institutional staff; provide financial incentives and apply political and public persuasion [23].

Another major incentive consists of the board's planning efforts to allow institutional flexibility and autonomy to those institutions which agree to voluntarily comply with and conform to policy mandates. Cohen [6], illustrates this point in addressing the issue of state-induced demands for articulation agreements in California between junior and senior colleges. In his report to the California Postsecondary Education Ad Hoc Committee on Community College Transfers. He reported that: "The most effective activities for enhancing the transfer of college credit seems to be those in which a single institution (junior college) works out transfer agreements with senior colleges...instead of (being forced by) statewide articulation agreements which always fall short of enhancing transfers"[6, p.3].

Planning Model

In addition to considering the basic planning requirements and incentives for promoting acceptance of interinstitutional cooperation, state governing boards and their constituent institutions need to mutually consider the proper planning model for achieving academic program development. Depending on the planning orientation and expertise, these planning models can take many forms. Some planning models can and have been mathematical in their deisgn [20]. Others have been more social, systematic and generic in their design [14, 22].

Basically the planning models adopted and implemented by state governing boards and consortiums have been based on the concept of "programming, planning and budgeting system" or "PPBS". Freeman and Kopf's [13] multiphase rolling plan (MRP) clearly illustrates this point. This plan covers a five year time period; allows for multi-institutional participation in defining the planning goals, objectives and options; considers academic program development and the application and efficient use of resources according to collectively conceived planning objectives.

Planning Process

Interinstitutional cooperation, to be effective as a planning strategy, must be developed and implemented throughout the seven sequential planning steps of the planning process mutually agreed on by the state governing boards, consortiums and individual institutions. These planning steps within the planning process include (1) setting goals and objectives, (2) identifying programs, (3) defining resource requirements of programs and institutions, (4) comparing resource requirements to those available, (5) developing program management to promote maximum effectiveness and efficiency and (6) implementing an evaluation program [1, 17]. The Indiana Commission on Higher Education has used interinstitutional cooperation throughout each phase of its planning process (1982).

Its constituent institutions have contributed greatly to resultant statewide plan for academic program development.

Also, the state governing boards of Maine, New York and Maryland have used interinstitutional cooperation to guide their statewide planning process in the development of their statewide plans for academic development. However, these state governing boards have provided greater opportunities for consortiums of institutions to contribute to that process and its final product - the statewide coordination plan [25, 26, 33].

State governing boards through their use of incentives have contributed to the efforts of constituent institutions (public and private) to form consortiums. These consortiums have developed various interinstitutional cooperative approaches to maximize the use institutional resources required to mutually improve academic program development. What type of interinstitutional cooperative approaches have been developed and used by these consortiums? What planning objectives for academic program development have these interinstitutional cooperative approaches been used to achieve? Also, on what geographic level have consortiums sought to achieve their planning objectives through the use of various cooperative approaches? Answers to these questions are discussed below.

INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATIVE APPROACHES

Seven interinstitutional cooperative approaches have been used in higher education to improve academic program development [3, 34, 38, 40]. These include, under state board approval and/or support, the cooperative efforts of a collective union or consortium of higher educational instituions to plan and implement:

a) articulation agreements;
b) student exchange programs;
c) manpower exchange programs;

d) resource sharing agreements;
e) educational exchange programs;
f) private-public cooperative agreements;
and
g) international exchange programs [35].

Generally, the planning objectives for academic program development, as sought through the use of these interinstitutional cooperative approaches are diverse. They include the pooling of multi-institutional resources to provide new educational opportunities for students; improvements in the quality of academic degree programs; better planned diversity among academic programs; control and avoidance of cost ineffectiveness in academic program development and instruction; improvements in student recruitment and retention; greater institutional stability; and better access to more efficient use of under utilized campus facilities and other regional resources for the support of academic programs [23, 28, 39].

Other planning objectives have included the prevention and reduction in academic program duplication, and improvements in the allocation of limited state funding resources to diverse types of institutions throughout a specified geographic area [40]. The Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) [40] claims that interinstitutional cooperation, as practiced by two or more state governing boards or institutions, can help ensure that (1) not every state or institution needs to be comprehensive in its academic program offerings; (2) high-cost, low-demand academic programs are not duplicated; (3) resources are allocated or reallocated more efficiently across the region, among institutions and groupings of states; (4) institutional resources are combined or coordinated to improve program effectiveness; and (5) student access to uncommon academic programs is protected. Below is a discussion of how various cooperative approaches which have been used by consortiums at the local, regional and interstate georgraphic levels to achieve various planning objectives.

Local Level

The local level is defined as a city or standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA). The most frequently used interinstitutional cooperative approaches at this level are articulation agreements, private-public exchange programs, educational exchange programs and resource sharing agreements. Each of these approaches, and their related planning objectives are discussed below.

Articulation agreements between different higher educational institutions and secondary schools have been widely used by consortiums to improve academic program development [28]. In Malone's [28] study a small liberal arts college, a comprehensive public university and a local high school district formed a consortium. They selected five planning objectives. These included efforts to (1) prevent the unnecessary competition and overlap of course offerings; (2) improve the quality and comprehensiveness of academic programs within and between participating institutions; (3) limit the rising cost of instruction; (4) improve the transfer of college credit and degrees; and (5) facilitate the lateral mobility of students between academic programs and institutions. Achievement of these planning objectives enabled each member of the consortim to reallocate their resources to other program or institutional development needs.

Private-public cooperative agreements offers a new opportunity for private and public colleges and universities to mutually develop and achieve planning objectives designed to enable such institutions to respond more efficiently to the academic program development needs of their respected students [27]. Basically, three planning objectives have been developed and achieved by institutions which have adopted this approach to interinstitutional cooperation. These objectives have included efforts to (1) maximize the use, where needed, of under-utilized facilities; (2) limit the institution's commitment of funds to construct, re-

habilitate or maintain campus facilities; and (3) minimize the cost per institution in the purchase of expensive technological and scientific research equipment.

Educational exchange programs and resource sharing agreements have been applied at the local level to improve academic program development [39]. Two planning objectives have been sought through the combined use of these two approaches. First, to improve the efforts of each institution within the consortium to reduce their institution's financial investment in scientific and technological equipment. Second, to enable each institution the flexibility to reallocate limited manpower, funds and facilities for innovative and changing institutional needs. These planning objectives do not exhaust the unlimited use of these approaches for allowing institutions or consortiums to maximize the most effective use of their limited resources.

Regional

The regional level is defined as two or more standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs). Four cooperative approaches frequently used at this level include educational exchange programs, articulation agreements, resource sharing agreements and private/public cooperative agreements. These cooperative approaches and planning objectives are discussed below.

Milliken University used interinstitutional cooperation to develop an educational exchange program in cooperation with the graduate schools of the University of Illinois, Illinois State University, Sangamon State University and Eastern Illinois University [2]. Students from the participating institutions were allowed to take courses at the Milliken Graduate Study Center. Member institutions were allowed to set up satellite graduate programs at the center.

Four planning objectives were sought from the development and implementation

of the Milliken Graduate Center. First, to enable member institutions to reduce and eliminate cost inefficient academic programs. Second, to improve cost management and control of newly developed and experimental academic programs. Third, to enable host and non-host institutions of graduate centers to experience more productive use of their empty and under utilized classrooms and campus facilities. Fourth, from the achievement of the first three objectives, to succeed in establishing a cooperative climate among the institutions in their future plans for academic program development.

Articulation agreements have been used between community colleges and universities in regions throughout the country for purposes of academic program development [3]. Five planning objectives have been sought from the use of this cooperative approach. First, to prevent the duplication of course offerings between community colleges and four-year institutions. Second, to improve the effective transfer of college credit and associate degrees. Third, to aid institutions in their efforts to limited instructional expenses by controlling the over-lapping and duplication of course offerings. Fourth, to improve the lateral mobility of students between academic programs and institutions. Fifth, to limit the expansion of community colleges into four-year institutions.

Frequently, two or more cooperative approaches are used by institutions for purposes of academic program development. Resource sharing agreements and private/public cooperative agreements have received wide spread use by higher education institutions in the South [15]. This point is evident by actions taken by colleges and universitites in three regional areas: Nashville, TN; Norfolk, VA; and Savannah, GA. Within each of these regions predominantly Black and White institutions, public and private, used these two cooperative approaches to engage in joint institutional planning. Their objective was to maximize the use of campus

facilities and technological equipment. Prior to such cooperative planning, individually, these institutions were limited in their ability to develop relevant and marketable academic programs because of the need to allocate a disproportinate amount of their funding resources to campus facilities and technological equipment.

Four planning objectives were sought from the combined use of these two cooperative approaches. First, to enable institutions to control cost in the expansion of campus facilities in response to the fluctuating enrollments at institutions throughout the respected regions. Second, to enable institutions to reallocate savings achieved from the first objective, to support and improve academic programs and instruction. Third, to enable institutions to establish and promote a cooperative climate on common issues and concerns related to efforts to develop and improve academic programs relevant to the region in which they served. Fourth, to enable institutions to control and reduce the cost of sceintific and technological equipment required to improve classroom instruction and the quality of academic program offerings.

Interstate Level

The interstate level is defined as two or more states which are represented by their respected state governing boards and/or institutions. Most often the institutions from these various states are encouraged and supported by respected state governing boards to engage in cooperative approaches with other institutions within neighboring and distant states [34, 36, 39].

These institutions, either through self-initiation or the sponsorship of their respected state governing boards, have organized themselves into consortiums. As such, they have become structurally organized and goal directed for the pursuit of mutually beneficial objectives for academic program development. Most frequently, these consortiums have used three interinstitutional cooperative approaches: articulation agreements, educational exhcange programs and student exchange programs[38, 39].

The Committee on Institutional Cooperation [39]; and the Professional and Student Exchange Program, and the Interstate Coordination Program [40] have utilized each of these approaches. The planning objectives they sought to achieve were similar to those sought by consortiums at the local and regional levels. At the interstate level four of the major planning objectives have included efforts to reduce academic degree duplication at the and overlap among institutions. Also, these objectives focused on efforts to improve academic program cost savings and its reallocation to other educational expenses; and improvements in the use of institutional resources: human, physical and funding for facilitating the expansion of more marketable and productive academic programs. Unlike some consortiums at the local level, consortiums at the interstate level have focused their cooperative approaches and planning objectives on ways to improve academic program developement for graduate students.

Studies on the use of interinstitutional cooperative at this level have proved that the closer the states to each other, the greater the chance and number of cooperative approaches such consortiums will adopt [7, 38, 39].

CONCLUSION

Since the early 1920's, interinstitutional cooperation has been used as a planning strategy by state governing boards and their constituent institutions. It is viewed as a viable means to maximize the use of limited funding resources for purposes of academic program development. Cooperative approaches to interinstitutional cooperation have been applied at three geographic levels: local, regional and the interstate.

State governing boards have integrated interinstitutional cooperation within the planning considerations which guide the development of statewide coordination plans. Their goal is to promote its use among and between higher educational institutions within statewide systems of higher education, including both public and private institutions.

Some states have provided incentives to encourage institutions to voluntarily adopt and engate in the use of interinstitutional cooperation as a planning strategy for academic program development. In some cases, state governing boards have used their governing powers over academic program review and approval, insitutitional planning and budget review to saliently make interinstitutional cooperation the "norm" among institutions under their purview. However, institutional concerns for survival in face of economic or market conditions which negatively affect student enrollment and the profitability of curriculum and degree program offerings have done more to encouraged institutions to voluntarily consider interinstitutional cooperation as a planning strategy for academic program development.

Consequently, institutions have formed consortiums to plan and implement cooperative approaches, for mutual benefit. Some of these approaches have included manpower exchange programs, public and private cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, educational exchange programs, articulation agreements, student exchange programs, and international exchange programs. These cooperative approaches have been planned and operated at various geographic levels.

Higher education, to benefit from interinstitutional cooperation, must establish and make viable interinstitutionan research - the integration and coordination of institutional research activities among member institutions of consortiums. This form of research should be used to develop a statewide management information system consistent with the academic program development

needs of the consortium and the geographic area in which it serves [32]. Other functions of this form of research should be to a) measure the effectiveness of interinstitutional cooperative approaches, b) assist in the design of innovative interinstitutional cooperative approaches, and c) evaluate the benefits derived from the use of interinstitutional cooperative approaches.

Any serious commitment or long-term use of interinstitutional cooperation for academic program development, either by state governing boards or consortiums, must address six interrelated questions:

1. How might student access to higher education as measured by travel time, and residential/work displacement and inconvenience be affected?

2. What immediate or long-term affect might the product or functional requirements of interinstitutional cooperative approaches have on faculty personnel practices and academic freedom?

3. How might institutional accountability be measured and defined; and which institutions, individually or collectively, should be ultimately responsible for demonstrating and achieving institutional accountability relative to the effective and productive use of state funding?

4. If consortiums and private higher educational associations, i.e., WICHE, NCHEMS, CIC, etc. are capable of coordinating and effecting the use of voluntary interinstitutional cooperation with institutions, what role and power modifications of state governing boards are required to achieve academic program developement via consortiums?

5. What immediate or long-term affect might inter-institutional cooperative approaches have on local, state, and Federal funding policies which affect higher education?

and

6. As an extension of Question #5, what insititutionally-directed advocacy or lobbying strategies are required to positively impact on the legislative policies and budgeting processes of government which affects the use of interinstitutional cooperation?

Only through the timely and efficient use of such research in providing answers to these questions can higher educational institutions maximize the use of interinstitutional cooperation to improve academic program development.

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